



## *Education Committee*

February 26, 2018

The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local government - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members represent over 96% of Connecticut's population. We appreciate the opportunity to testify on bills of interest to towns and cities.

### **HB 5171      An Act Prohibiting The Executive Branch From Making Rescissions Or Other Reductions To The Education Cost Sharing Grant During the Fiscal Year**

CCM supports HB 5171 as it would prohibit the Executive Branch from making rescissions or other reductions to the education equalization aid grant, including unspecified lapses and holdbacks. This would help provide increased stability and predictability in local education budgets.

Education is the largest single item in municipal budgets. In some towns it is as much as 80% of the total budget. Rising education costs coupled with reductions in education aid place additional pressure on municipalities to generate additional revenue through its only source, the local property tax.

Municipalities have no choice but to cut back on other municipal services and raise property taxes as they struggle to absorb reductions in education aid while meeting the requirements of burdensome underfunded and unfunded mandates, including the minimum budget requirement.

An equal partnership between state and local revenue sources has been a longstanding goal of the Connecticut State Board of Education. In 1989-90, the State's share of total education expenditures reached 45.5 percent, the closest it has ever come to reaching the goal of a 50-50 partnership in education funding.<sup>1</sup>

Since then, the State's share has been well below the fifty-percent mark. The Governor's Task Force to Study the Education Cost Sharing Grant reiterated the 50-50 goal in 1999 when it

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<sup>1</sup> SDE data.

recommended, “The State should budget and appropriate funds biennially to demonstrate progress toward equal state and local spending for education.”<sup>2</sup>

In FY 12, Connecticut ranked 42th in the nation for state share of preK-12 public education funding.<sup>3</sup> Chronic state underfunding of PreK-12 public education has made Connecticut the most reliant state in the nation on property taxes to fund education.

CCM appreciates the steps the Committee has taken in this proposal to protect education aid to municipalities while reducing pressure on the local property tax. **We urge the Committee to favorably report on HB 5171.**

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If you have any questions, please contact Daniel C. Giungi, Senior Legislative Associate for CCM, at [dgiungi@ccm-ct.org](mailto:dgiungi@ccm-ct.org) or (203) 498-3023.

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<sup>2</sup> Task Force to Study the Education Cost Sharing Grant, Recommendations, February 2, 1999.

<sup>3</sup> US Census Bureau, Public Education Finances, 2014